

NAVY MEDICINE LIVE

THE OFFICIAL BLOG OF U.S. NAVY AND MARINE CORPS HEALTH CARE • 2011 & 2012 WINNER OF BEST NAVY BLOG

- Home
- About
- Disclaimer
- Navy Medicine News
- Navy Medicine WebSite
-

Written on MAY 24, 2013 AT 7:00 AM by VKREMER

Avoiding Recreational Water Illnesses

Filed under FAMILIES, FORCE HEALTH AND SAFETY, HEATH (NO COMMENTS)

By Anthony Carotenuto, [Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center](#), Preventive Medicine staff



Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jon Dasbach treads water during the 2nd class petty officer's course at Scott Pool at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam. (U.S. Navy photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class [REDACTED])






The week before Memorial Day (May 20–26, 2013) is [Recreational Water Illness and Injury \(RWII\) Prevention Week](#). According to the [Centers for Disease Control](#), thousands of Americans get sick every year with recreational water illnesses (RWIs), which are caused by germs found in places where we swim. The goal of RWII Prevention Week is to raise awareness about healthy and safe swimming.

Have your eyes ever started to sting and turn red while you were swimming in a pool? Did you think it was because of the chlorine in the water? It's not actually the chlorine that makes your eyes red. It is chloramines. This chemical forms when chlorine used to disinfect the

Navy Medicine Video

Navy Medicine is a global healthcare network of 63,000 Navy medical personnel around the world who provide high quality health care to more than one million eligible beneficiaries. Navy Medicine personnel deploy with Sailors and Marines worldwide, providing critical mission support aboard ship, in the air, under the sea and on the battlefield.

Navy Medicine Social Media

-  Follow us on Twitter
-  Join us on Facebook
-  Read our publications
-  View our photo stream
-  Watch our videos

Navy Medicine Live Archives

- February 2015 (12)
- January 2015 (12)
- December 2014 (17)
- November 2014 (11)

water combines with what comes out or washes off of swimmers' bodies (e.g., urine, sweat and personal care products) and can irritate the eyes and lungs and can even aggravate asthma. Chloramines also uses up the chlorine in the pool, which would otherwise kill germs.

These germs get into the water when they wash off of swimmers' bodies or when infected swimmers have diarrhea in the water. Chlorine and other pool water treatments don't kill germs instantly. And just one diarrheal incident can release enough germs into the water that swallowing a mouthful can cause diarrhea lasting up to 2–3 weeks.

Swimmers, It's Our Job to Keep Germs, Bodily Waste out of the Water

We all share the water we swim in, and we each need to do our part to keep ourselves, our families, and our friends healthy. To help protect yourself and other swimmers from germs, here are a few simple and effective steps all swimmers can take each time we swim:

- **Keep the bodily waste out of the water.**
 - Don't swim when you have diarrhea.
 - Shower with soap before you start swimming.
 - After taking a long break from the water, take a rinse shower before you return to the water.
 - Take bathroom breaks every 60 minutes.
 - Wash your hands after using the toilet or changing diapers.
- **Check the chlorine and pH levels before getting into the water.**
 - Proper chlorine (1–3 mg/L or parts per million [ppm]) and pH (7.2–7.8) levels maximize germ-killing power
 - Most superstores, hardware stores, and pool-supply stores sell pool test strips.
- **Don't swallow the water you swim in.**

Parents of young children should take a few extra steps:

- **Take children on bathroom breaks every 60 minutes or check diapers every 30–60 minutes.**
 - Change diapers in the bathroom or diaper-changing area and not at poolside where germs can rinse into the water.

Remember ... Think Healthy. Swim Healthy. Be Healthy!

For more information about healthy swimming, visit <http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nmcphc/program-and-policy-support/swimming-pools-and-bathing-places/Pages/default.aspx>.

← Next post

Previous post →

vkremer tagged this post with: [Centers for Disease Control](#), [health](#), [Memorial Day](#), [Navy](#), [Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center](#), [Navy Medicine](#), [preventive medicine](#), [Recreation Water Illness Safety](#), [swimming](#), [water illness safety](#), [water safety](#)

Read 221 articles by [vkremer](#)

October 2014 (15)
September 2014 (20)
August 2014 (14)
July 2014 (13)
June 2014 (8)
May 2014 (11)
April 2014 (9)
March 2014 (14)
February 2014 (7)
January 2014 (7)
December 2013 (7)
November 2013 (12)
October 2013 (7)
September 2013 (14)
August 2013 (13)
July 2013 (11)
June 2013 (22)
May 2013 (15)
April 2013 (14)
March 2013 (14)
February 2013 (14)
January 2013 (12)
December 2012 (11)
November 2012 (11)
October 2012 (7)
September 2012 (9)
August 2012 (12)
July 2012 (13)
June 2012 (17)
May 2012 (22)
April 2012 (14)
March 2012 (13)
February 2012 (14)
January 2012 (13)
December 2011 (13)
November 2011 (20)
October 2011 (22)
September 2011 (12)
August 2011 (16)

http://navymedicine.navylive.dodlive.mil/archives/4896[2/23/2015 2:11:14 PM]